

# In brief

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## SHOW ME ANY OTHER COUNTRY...

BY

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## FOREWORD

Betty Knowles Hunt is a hard-working housewife and the mother of three small daughters.

This article is her spontaneous challenge to a statement by a leading American socialist that appeared in her local paper.

Mrs. Hunt's answer originally appeared in the Bridgeport (Connecticut) *Post* of February 25, 1947. It is here reproduced, with revisions made by the author.

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# SHOW ME ANY OTHER COUNTRY . . .



## LOOK BEHIND THE LABEL

AMERICANS, in general, regard socialism as something alien and unrelated to America, and would never consider joining the Socialist party. Yet, they clamor loudly for every piece of socialistic legislation which is offered — so long as it is sugar-coated with an American label.

It must be very disheartening for sincere socialists to note the continuing impotence of their party, while, at the same time, a pseudo-socialism in free-enterprise wrappings has been able to command such a tremendous following from the rank and file. This is a sad commentary on the political and economic ignorance of the American people. They dismiss socialism with a wave of the hand, and then line up in droves behind social security, socialized industry, medicine, housing and education. They denounce socialism, and yet innocently and ignorantly spout its doctrines day in and day out. Nothing more constructive could happen to the American public than to have it understand socialism clearly, be able to identify its doctrines beneath all their various disguises, and then either to endorse or repudiate its principles — openly and honestly.

I have done my own personal job of study, analysis and evaluation of socialism; I take my stand in its opposition, and would like to present some of my reasons for so doing.

There is no question but that socialistic proposals seem logical, just and humanitarian. They sound like the idealistic answer to a muddled world's prayer. In one breath, they denounce the slavery of totalitarianism and the "crazy quilt of capitalism," and offer a Utopian "middle way" which eliminates the liabilities and retains the assets of both collectivism and individualism. They mix the oil of one with the water of the other and present their mixed formula of perfection. It is all very intoxicating and consoling — until one realizes that oil and water will not mix! At that point, it becomes necessary to say to you, Mr. Socialist: "Show me!"

#### UTOPIA—ON PAPER

YOU say: "We socialists offer logical reasons why we shall have more freedom, and certainly a surer victory over poverty on the basis of public ownership of things necessary to the common life and their democratic control under democratically controlled planning." This is a lovely blueprint, but show me a concrete example of where this has taken place. Show me a spot on God's green earth where socialism has increased individual freedom and eliminated poverty. Show me where it has not meant "rigorous and arbitrary regulation," and where it has increased "private initiative and consumer's choice." Show me where it has proved

“the road of escape to true freedom as well as to peace and plenty.” Show me this Utopia — not on paper, but in reality!

You admit, in your writings, that socialism in Germany, Italy and Russia resulted in nazism, fascism and communism, but you say these were perversions of true socialism — and you abhor them. That’s fine, I do too. But show me where socialism has avoided these pitfalls and led to freedom and prosperity for everyone, as your blueprint says it will.

#### THE CURE THAT KILLS

You point out and underscore many of the errors of American capitalism, and I heartily concur in them all, but your solution and mine are at opposite ends of the pole. I am more afraid of your cure than I am of our present ailments! You point to the evil of private monopoly, and then you propose to cure this evil by a bigger and more powerful state monopoly. I find this very inconsistent. If monopolies are destructive of freedom — and I believe with you that they are — then the answer ought to be to curtail or prevent monopolies, not to substitute one for the other.

The only cure for monopolies is freer and wider-spread competition in an economic system which insists that this door of private competition stay open. When you write in one of your pamphlets: “There wasn’t much freedom when the 200 largest corporations controlled more than 50 per cent of the business wealth of America,” I have to smile at your concern, despite the fact that I



would prefer to see fewer "big businesses" and more "middle-sized" businesses. Two hundred businesses with only 50 per cent of our business wealth is still a far cry from monopoly, and not half so glaring a danger as a completely concentrated monopoly such as John L. Lewis enjoys in the coal mines. You say nothing at all about this, and ignore the most stifling monopoly in the world — socialized Russia — where everything is owned by the state, and everyone is compelled to belong to one huge closed shop, and to work wherever and for whatever the state decrees.

You admire the British experiment in socialism, but you do not say how socialism is to solve Britain's problems. The key to her post-war struggle still is production, and yet you fail to show socialism's incentive to more production. The weary miners want shorter hours and higher pay. The trade unions of England have geared their output to accommodate their weakest member. How can debt-burdened Britain pay more money for less work — when what she needs is more work for less money? And how can she keep her Labor government in power, except by force or by acceding to the unanswerable demands of the workers who are the bulwark of her support? Poor Britain is damned if she does and damned if she doesn't. So is France. So is Italy. So is Russia — and all of Europe. We may have our troubles here in America, but the socialized world is 100 per cent worse off than we are. It is also noteworthy that in the two least-socialized European nations — Holland and Belgium — recovery has been most rapid!








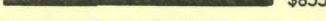
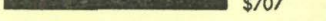







What makes you believe that men who are supposed to "manage" in the public interest will be any less subject to the love of power or the human evils of greed and corruption than those who "manage" privately. They are the same people, and they possess the same shortcomings. Also, the incentive to good judgment is stronger with private managers who must assume the financial loss for their mistakes, while the government managers can call upon the federal treasury to subsidize their incompetence.

We have the freest, most democratically-controlled government on earth, and yet in the past score of years we have had very little to say about the edicts which have poured forth from government agencies and their appointed directors. Power is intoxicating to all. It feeds upon itself. We the people gain nothing by substituting new people for old in Washington. Our only hope is to take away the power that has been concentrated there, so that no one can use it benevolently or otherwise. Once we allow ourselves to become the subjects of benevolent power, we shall soon find ourselves the slaves of a very unbenevolent power.

#### NATURAL BEDFELLOWS

YOU explain the coalitions of socialists with communists in Europe as "a grim necessity at a critical moment," but this is not the whole answer. You neglect to point out what a broad base of common ground exists between the two parties. Both believe in public ownership instead of private ownership, and both are buddies in their hatred of

## AVERAGE INCOME PER PERSON

United States		
Canada		
New Zealand		
Great Britain		
Switzerland		
Australia		
Netherlands		\$855
Eire		\$707
France		\$684
Denmark		\$680
Sweden		\$653
Germany		\$646
Belgium		\$600
Norway		\$539
Austria		\$511
Czechoslovakia		\$455

Note: Stated another way, these amounts represent what the average person can buy with his money. — Incomplete data for thirty-five other countries, including the Soviet Union, are available. Source: Colin Clark, *The Conditions of Economic Progress* (London: Macmillan, 1957).

capitalism, free-enterprise, and the profit motive. You differ only in degree and in means, but socialism is closer to communism than it is to capitalism. And when that “critical moment” comes, you will sacrifice your belief in “freedom” before you will relinquish your collectivized program for “security.”

Here lies the greatest danger of socialism. Actually, it is the economic philosophy of communism.



## THE LABOR FORCE, 1925-1934

\$1381	Greece	\$397
\$1337	Finland	\$380
2	Hungary	\$359
	Japan	\$353
	Poland	\$352
	Latvia	\$345
	Italy	\$343
	Portugal	\$342
	Estonia	\$341
	Yugoslavia	\$330
	U.S.S.R.	\$320
	South Africa	\$276
	Bulgaria	\$259
	Roumania	\$243
	Lithuania	\$207

roduced in a year. Amounts are comparable in terms of buying  
dia, suggest figures in most instances between \$100 and \$400.  
(940)

Those of us who repudiate it do so for two very definite reasons.

First, we believe that economic and political philosophies go hand in hand and are inseparable. We believe it is no accident that "free enterprise" developed along with a free republic, and that it is equally no accident that where a collectivized economy was installed, individual freedom was sacrificed. In the same way, those countries which

have tried a hybrid system, half-collectivized and half-free, have in the same proportion increased regimentation, decreased individual initiative and choice, and are in constant danger of swinging further to the left.

Second, despite your emphasis on increased production and plenty via socialism, we can find no examples of such results in proof. Show me a socialized or even a half-socialized country which has remotely approached our free-enterprise record of production and plenty. Show me a socialized or half-socialized country which has produced a higher standard of living for workers than capitalistic America. Show me where socialism has produced cheaper cars, telephones, radios, movies, gadgets or comforts, and where they have been wider distributed among the average people, than here in America. Show me any other country where people own as many homes, or can match our 75 million life insurance policyholders, or our 50 million bank accounts, or our 80 million bondholders. If you know a better, happier, more envied workers' republic than we have right here in America, where is it?

Don't tell me that this difference is merely because America has large natural resources! India, China and Russia also have great natural resources. Somebody once said: "Only Americans find oil." Why? Don't tell me that our miraculous output of inventions and creations is due to our "natural inventiveness." We are nothing more than a conglomeration of all other peoples. Our Steinmetzes, Pupins, Einsteins and others came to our shores as penniless refugees, and brought their

genius with them. Why have we had to erect barriers against those who would come in droves to this land of freedom and opportunity? Why have the socialist countries had to erect barriers to keep their own people at home? Name me some of the major inventions produced under socialism in order to prove that individual incentive still exists there. I do not know of them.

Socialists and communists make the same fatal mistake. They place security ahead of freedom. America is the prime example of a nation which founded itself on the basic principle of individual freedom. Its Constitution bristles with limitations upon the government — and the result has been a greater measure of security for Americans than for all other nations. America offered unlimited rewards for initiative, enterprise and wisdom — and she guaranteed no subsidy for laziness, incompetence or failure. Thus she used the carrot and stick method of encouraging individuals to create, produce and succeed. This free way of life is a rugged, painful business at times, but it has paid the biggest dividends on earth and it has been worth every weary mile of it.

Freedom appeals to man's strength; socialism and communism appeal to man's weakness. Freedom teaches a man to stand independently on his own feet; the others teach him to lose himself in the protective herd. Freedom places its emphasis on man himself; the others lose man in their emphasis on mankind.

#### CONFORM OR BE LIQUIDATED

ONE of the pleasant-sounding doctrines of social-

ism and communism is "economic and social planning instead of individual anarchy." But you neglect to mention that for a "plan" to succeed, we must all be fitted into it — whether we like it or not. You would like us to accept the "plan" voluntarily, but if we do not, you fail to explain that we must then be compelled to do so. This is where communists defeat socialists. They have no compunctions about using force to further their ends. "Conform or be liquidated" is their motto. The end justifies the means. Socialists are more squeamish, and that is why the communists will always supplant them when the "emergency" comes along.

In free America, we have recently had an inkling of what this could mean. Under OPA planning of our whole industrial and economic life, when the cattle raisers balked at selling their produce without a normal profit, our President stated in a nation-wide address that he had actually considered government seizure of all the cattle. Shades of Russia! It does not require much imagination to picture the result of such a plan. Cattle raisers would have rebelled. Force would have been used. Fines, imprisonment and death would have followed. Is this so different from Russia's collectivization of her farms, her ruthless "elimination" of rebels, and the subsequent starvation of five million of her farm families? But the communists will argue that the plan was for the benefit of all, and that individuals do not count when society is expected to gain. Nonsense! How can you possibly increase the security of society by destroying the security of its individuals?



Advocates of planning as a stabilizer always forget that planners also must be human, and subject to all the shortcomings and mistakes of other human beings. Even the most rabid endorsers of OPA admit that the individual injustices were numerous and unavoidable. Yet these individuals were expected to submit and be sacrificed in the interest of the over-all plan.

Government-subsidized potatoes are rotting in the fields by the ton. The planning advocates say: "But this is because we did not control the production." And so it goes. After you control production, then you must control distribution, and back we go to rationing, price-fixing, wage-fixing — and the whole involved, impossible mess. I do not blame the planners. They could be the wisest and best-intentioned persons in the world. I blame the whole idea, because it is impossible, impractical, and incapable of justice, and because the taxpayers foot the bill for every inevitable mistake.

There is not a single socialist or communist doctrine that does not sound good, but which is not equally fatal. "Production for use and not for profit." You do not say *who* is to decide what is for use. It is easy to look upon the auto today and call it "useful," but who thought so in its awkward infancy? Would the airplane have been considered "useful"? Or the radio? Or splitting the atom? Who among men is so wise that he can know these things in advance, and therefore be trusted with the power to permit or forbid them?

And who profited most from the creation and mass-production of the auto together with all its subsequent allied industries? Did Henry Ford?



Or did the whole American people, whose standard of living was raised thereby? Did Henry Ford's accumulation of wealth come out of anyone else's pocket? Or did he create a new source of wealth for millions of less gifted people?

#### LIBERTY MEANS RESPONSIBILITY

**M**Y argument against socialism is that America already has the best economic and political system yet devised, and that this is proven by her glorious record — and not in a paper blueprint. America did not become the breadbasket, the factory, the bank, and the hope of the world by following the wrong systems or believing in the wrong principles. Her solution is to reacquaint herself with her own best way of life, and to live up to its tenets more faithfully — not to throw it away before she has completely understood or practiced it.

American capitalism has never failed; only some of our human capitalists have failed. Whenever a free-enterpriser achieves his own goal, and then attempts to shut the door of opportunity behind him, or to choke off the free play of competition around him, then he has cheated his own system. Whenever believers in freedom discriminate against minorities, or show favoritism to meritless friends, then they are sabotaging their own constitutional principles and weakening the foundations upon which America was built. Whenever any individual or group in America uses the political power to gain advantage at the expense of others, then such persons or groups are undermining the structure of our republic,

and the results will be evil and unjust. Whenever an American acquires wealth or power — and then fails to be a good and honest steward of these benefits — then he not only denies the principles of America, he denies the principles of Christianity.

The answer, and the only answer, is for all of us to educate ourselves to the responsibilities as well as to the benefits of freedom. Perhaps as a people, we are not morally strong enough to be free. If that is the case, then we shall certainly lose our freedom, and it will not matter much what “ism” supplants Americanism. But this will not prove that our free way of life was not the best way. It will only prove that we were not worthy of it.

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